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Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The continual exposure of unthought biases and assumptions is a way of producing a strong objectivity, which strengthens science as a progressive project.

(Bassett, 1999)

The intention of this chapter is twofold. First, it argues that this study falls within the ambit of Geography. To justify this stance, the tenets of Geography as a science are exposed. Theories that have been the mainstay of geographical thought are explicated. Environmental determinism, quantitative revolution, humanistic geography and post-modernism are mentioned as significant theories that stand among other geographical theories that have shaped geographical thinking. The time-space dimension, which is a property of geographical understanding, is reflected as a guiding beacon for conceptualising the topic under analysis. Second, the chapter also examines the question of **development** in the context of the core-periphery dichotomy. The core is defined as **developed spaces** while the periphery is defined as **less-developed spaces**. It is also asserted that modernisation as a eurocentric development model, has created a dependency syndrome for less developed countries. Both modernisation and dependency theories are discussed so as to understand how these relate to South Africa's development discourse. If they do not, what then informs South Africa's development thought.

2.1. A geographical discourse

It is a principal understanding of practitioners of Geography that Geography is a science. A salient feature of science is an abundance of evidence that suggests that science is held in high regard in everyday life. It is true that every practitioner of science would like his/her field of study to be regarded as a terrain of science, as illustrated by scholars in Library Science, Administrative Science, Speech Science,

Forest Science, Dairy Science etc. As observed by Alvares (1992:16): science has become a universal commodity "approved by many whose devotion to its tenets and its propagation is more often than not related to its ability to provide a high living wage and, often, in addition, power, prestige and a chauffeur-driven-car. Like the early morning toothbrush, science is considered a precondition for a freshly minted worldview uncontaminated by unlearned or unemancipated perceptions." Law (1989) quoted in Johnston (1991:284) adds that, for some, "science is something you do in the laboratory, something you talk about, and something you get excited about. For others, science is what they write and what they read in the journals".

It is a point of fact that Geography is also a science. Its scientism, like all sciences, derives from paradigms⁷, and paradigms are accepted as foundations of scientific understanding as they provide the theoretical and methodological platforms for scientific comprehension. **Environmental determinism** became the first paradigm of modern geography after several years of a body of unconnected facts. Mackinder the "chief advocate" (Madidi, 1995:1) of the philosophy claimed that the physical environment was a determining factor on the physical makeup and cultural activities of human beings. Adherents of this philosophy, believed in a cause-and-effect relationship between humans and the environment, where the environment was a *priori* in determining the behaviour of all inhabitants of the earth.

From environmental determinism to postmodernism, geographical thought has evolved alongside other sciences in a symbiotic way that defines the scientific ontology of Geography. What also emerged over time is the contemporary understanding that Geography comprises of two discernible disciplinary facets: Human Geography and Physical Geography. A historical problem with this dichotomy is that there has been a tendency in the past to attempt defining both parts of Geography in a positivist manner. This positivism in Geography manifested itself in what was known as the **quantitative revolution**. The quantitative revolution began in the late 1940s and culminated in the late 1950s (Cloke *et al.*, 1991:8). It can be traced to William Garrison who offered the first seminar to graduates of Michigan University in 1955 on the use of mathematical statistics in Geography (Martin G. J. & James P.E., 1993:442). It was basically a response to a growing dissatisfaction with

⁷ Kuhn's argument that "scientific activity is guided by a generally accepted philosophy, probability and methodology which determines the particular discipline's view of the world" (Forer, 1980:13).

environmental determinism. Quantitative theory maintained that there is one and only one science and only one methodology that extends from the natural to the human sciences. Physics became the paragon of all sciences, and so every science, including human sciences, should be modelled on Physics. "Accordingly, any empirical science should be capable of being reduced to concepts, principles and language of Physics" (Gould & Olsson, 1982:46). By placing more emphasis on Physics, quantitative geographers contended that geography was *idiographic*, merely concerned with description, and was lacking in theory. They sought to "transform geography as it was intellectually and numerically weak, and held in low esteem by other disciplines" (Unwin, 1992:119). With the quantitative revolution in Geography came a concerted effort to develop theories, test them and attempt to interpret phenomena through statistics and mathematics. In this way geographers would marvel at the complexities that would arise from mathematical and statistical numbers and figures.

Although quantification was advantageous to the development of Geography in that it "widened the field of application and freed Geography from its isolation" (Pred, 1981:18), it however, displayed shortcomings in the field of Human Geography. Unwin (1992:122) attests that quantification in Geography was "concerned with modelling the spatial organisation of society and with the development of mathematical and geometrical description of social relationships". The positivist approach lacked reference to *human agency* (Jackson and Smith, 1984). Its epistemological and theoretical base "denies the individuality and humanity of people, it ignores emotions and meanings, and treats humans in the same way as machines" (Johnston, 1985:16). "It tends to reduce people to terms in equations, ignore their individuality and freedom of action" Johnston, (1991:288). Ley (1996:204) provides a critique that argues that the lack of human agency is an epistemological and theoretical error that "devalues the power of human consciousness and human action to redirect the course of events. It limits the creative power of human intentionality". So although the fundamental problem with quantification in Human Geography is not the utilisation of statistical methods and mathematics, these have some advantages. The key factor is the lack of human agency that recognises that people cannot be seen and studied as objects. The question, "what about people" as was asked by Torsten Hägerstrand quoted in Pred (1981:20), is a recognition of the failure of the quantitative paradigm to create a humanistic niche. Advocating a

humanistic character of human Geography Vidal de la Blache quoted in (Pred 1981:20) talks of a “*milieu for every human individual and existence*” where people’s meaningful knowledge and experience of human faculties, constraints, aspirations, creativity and human tragedy can be located. In this way, a new philosophy was born. Spearheaded by Yi Fu Tuan and Berkerly (Ley, 1981) a **humanistic geography** movement began in the 1970s as a reaction to the quantitative approach in Human Geography. This philosophy is underpinned by four fundamental matrices “sub-theories”: Idealism, Phenomenology, Existentialism and Pragmatism. **Idealism** asserts that people as active beings develop theories to guide their actions. Such guidance includes the direction of future thinking, interpretation of perceptions, and the nature of decisions. To the realists, reality is in some way a mental construction where the world does not exist outside human observation. Associated with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl is **Phenomenology**, which argues that the real life-world of humans need not be interpreted through the usage of theories, but through the direct observation of reality or phenomena. Led by the popular Jeanne-Paul Satre, **Existentialism** maintains that humankind is the creator of reality. “*Reality is created by the free acts of human agents, for and by themselves*” (Johnston, 1986:71). Another matrix of humanistic philosophy is **Pragmatism**. This approach is principally associated with John Dewey. Sometimes referred to as realists, pragmatists assert that knowledge is developed via practical trial and error. The thought is therefore determined by the criteria of practical usefulness.

Humanistic geography may therefore be understood as a theoretical perspective and not a distinctive empirical subfield of Human Geography. It is not an “*alternative science*” (Johnston, 1986) of Geography. It is not a *revolution*, neither is it a diverging path, but a theoretical perspective, “*an antidote*” (Lammas, 1992) that endeavours “*to keep [the] discipline relevant and human(e)*” (Guelke, 1986:21). Its “*principal aim in geography is the reconciliation of social science and hu[man]kind, to accommodate understanding and wisdom, objectivity and subjectivity and materialism and idealism*”(Ley & Samuels, 1978:9).

The fundamental preoccupation of this study, located within the ethos of Human Geography precepts, is its exposure of the lived world of the people of the Western Highveld Region of Mpumalanga Province. A significant feature that denotes contemporary Human Geography is its insistence on the study of humankind as a

subject and not as an object. It focuses on the subjective elements, applying objective scientific procedures, to the identification and transmission of meanings (Johnston, 1985). A humanised Human Geography recognises that *“scientific practice is a social activity shaped by a multiplicity of social and psychological factors, biases and interests”* (Bassett, 1999:40). It recognises a tradition that treats human values and intentionality more seriously. It fortifies the human tradition with a critical, philosophically and theoretically informed orientation. It creates *“geographies of the mind”* or *“mental construction(s)”* (Campbell, 1994). The people of the study area have their own needs, interests and biases. They find themselves in a rural hinterland that is deprived of essential municipal services. Their lived geographies are villages that need water, electricity, roads and other essential municipal services. To understand these psychological factors, biases and interests, is critical for this study to adopt a philosophical framework that will practically unravel the lived world of the people of the study area.

2.2. A post modernist synthesis

A clear contribution derived from humanistic geography is its ability to have put at the centre stage the human aspect of geography. This has helped to shape geographical thought in the fields of social, cultural and aesthetic geography which geographies are contemporarily beginning to explore the lived world of people in all the regions of the world. Gandy (1996:23) asserts that *“the early 1990s have seen a growing awareness in geography of engagement between postmodernist ideas and modernism. An important theme in this emerging literature is the extent to which postmodernism embodies the emergence of a new social, cultural and political paradigm more conducive to creating people sensitive epistemologies”*. **Postmodernism** is defined by Jones (1999:530) as *“a term for a broad sweep of theoretical approaches whose common denominator is that they are informed by post-philosophies dominated by work which has been described as post-structuralist.”* Fox and Rowntree (2000:25), concur that *“postmodernism stands structuralism on its head by positing that we are not so much the passive recipients of our social structures as the inventors of our world”*. As a mode of academic enquiry postmodernism wishes to *“disentangle and deconstruct various texts to reveal the multiple discourses that inform human action and create human landscapes* (Fox & Rowntree, 2000:25). In essence, it intends to deepen human

understanding that was made difficult by “*modern theories of scientific revolution, empiricism and positivist scientific methodologies*” (Gandy, 1996:24). It arises as a response to “*the crisis of representation in human sciences*” (Berg, 1993:494). The crisis of representation refers to the fact that most modern discourses were not gender and race sensitive. Theories were virtually eurocentric and masculine. Discourses that were presented by females or people of colour were ignored or considered as inferior (Berg, 1993). As a result of all these discrepancies among other factors, postmodernism became a movement whose aim is to redress the deficiencies of modernism.

The study does not pretend to be postmodernist, it employs a critical theoretical approach which is a postmodernist tool. It also taps quite significantly from the humanistic orientation which could be classified as modern. It is a synthesis of the most suitable from modernism and the valuable from postmodernism. According to Berg (1993:501) “*certain postmodernisms are not so radically different from certain modernisms. This possibility in turn opens up space for a position between modernism and postmodernism; for if they are not radically opposed one might borrow freely from both perspectives without treading on epistemologically unsafe ground*”. From its humanistic content, this study has borrowed the human agency, the *verstehen* – an emphatic understanding — of people and their lived world. It is people’s lived world of hunger, deprivation, conflict, wars, disease destitution and ignorance that should pose a challenge to geographers. From its postmodernist outlook the quest for equity, the pursuit for justice and world peace are also *a priori* that indict the whole of the geographical academia.

2.3. A time-space perspective

Another dimension that distinguishes Geography from other social sciences in particular, is its temporal and spatial ontology. A brief explication of these two concepts will ensue in an effort to contextualise these in the framework of this study.

Kellerman (1989:7) relates that *time* may mean many things for individuals. It may be an experience or an ordering framework of events. Experiential time is lived time, it refers to individual images of time as short, long, fast and slow. Time is also an ordering framework of events in terms of “*before*” and “*after*”. The conceptualisation

of time in this discourse should be understood in relation to societal change. The occurrences of the past, present and future are temporal dimensions that define events as they occur in time and space. The calendar and the clock determine human understanding of time, as they are tools that indicate, hours, days, weeks, months and years. In its nature, time is a human creation. It is a major dimension along which all events occur and around which human lifecycles evolve (Kellerman, 1989:8). Individual experiences in a particular space, transform the individual experience into a collective experience and thus societal time arises. It is this societal time that tends to be more significant because the collective experience tends to impact on other spaces. The communities of the study Region (space), exist in the contemporary (present) South African transitional phase (time). These communities have collectively experienced the deprivations created by *homelands* (spaces), which were apartheid era (time) inventions. The struggle of the South African society to change the apartheid order, constitutes a historical (past) dimension of time. The time perspective in this discourse is an essential geographical component that assists in the proper contextualisation of this study.

This discourse acknowledges that both human and physical geographers define the concept of space differently. This difference is a product of time. The logical positivist conceptualisation usually advocated by physical geographers, views space as "*three dimensional Euclidean in which action occurs by contact [with the physical world]*" (Sack, 1980:56). Space is seen as the physical environment of regions and their settlements. Led by Lefebvre (1991) and Giddens (1981, 1985) human geographers interpret space as a social construction. The central tenet of this thinking is that space "*is not given or outside of social practices and their performance, but is produced through social practice*" (Dodgshon, 1998:8).

An analysis of motives for the colonisation of African territories and other parts of the world by European powers in the 18th and 19th centuries, reveal that colonisation was essentially a scramble for spaces. Colonies became new spaces of raw materials, spaces of religious and cultural diffusion, new market spaces, surplus capital investment spaces and spaces of adventure. In this instance, the phenomenon of colonisation is a social construction. The same could be said about the machinations of the apartheid mode of creation of spaces. The homeland policy, which removed most of the African communities from their economic, cultural and political abodes,

and located them in apartheid space structures of Bantustans, where poverty and deprivation characterise these newly found spaces, is a social construction. The present transformation process in South Africa is about creating new spaces. The TLC areas of the Western Highveld Region, like all other municipal spaces in the country, are newly found socio-economic and cultural spaces that have been designed by the present dispensation so as to obliterate apartheid spaces.

Geographers recognise a symbiotic existence between time and space. All events are time-space specific. The rural TLCs in the Study Region, are a product of a negotiated political settlement that occurred in the mid-1990s. The settlement, which in itself is a product of mental spaces of divergent views, is a product of time and space. The thinking in current South African local political conjuncture is that, local government should adopt a developmental character. This character means that local politics should be politics of civil society, where all communities and local councils are involved in synergy to deliver essential services and engender development projects aimed at bettering the lives of local communities. In this regard the understanding of the concept of development becomes imperative.

2.4. A development discourse

The observation by the World Development Report of 1991 that "*development is the most important challenge facing human race; [In that], despite the vast opportunities created by technological revolutions of the twentieth century, more than 1 billion people, one fifth of the world's population, live on less than one dollar a day*", (World Development Report, 1991:1) may perhaps constitute a prelude to the understanding of the nature of development. The comprehension may nevertheless not be easily attained because according to Coetzee (1989:11) "*development as change taking place over an extended period cannot be easily defined. Not only is it immensely difficult to visualise the final effects of development, but the complex fusion of goods, services, information, symbols and meanings makes it impossible to predetermine its ultimate destination*".

Joseph Schumpeter in his classic, *Theory of Economic Development* first used the term '*development*' in 1911. Its usage gained popularity in the post World War II years when economic development became one of the central themes in the political

discourse of most nations (Friedmann, 1980). Its classical meaning entailed a "*creative destruction*" of capitalist development and a creation of innovations (technical and organisational) in the industrialisation of economies.

There are many definitions and much disagreement on the term **development**. It depends on which side of the debate one is located. It is however possible to identify a series of phases in the evolution of development thought. The process and form of colonisation, and the resultant spatial patterns, have stimulated a great deal of interest on the part of geographers (Hoyle, 1978:7). This treatise will not attempt any theoretical rigour, nor will there be an attempt to discuss the various theories of development in detail. Instead, this study will limit itself to a few remarks in an effort to locate itself within development studies as an integral part of Geography, Hoyle (1978:7) affirms that "*from the classical period of Ptolemy to modern times geographers have always displayed a considerable interest in the less developed parts of the world*". Also it is hoped that more light will be shed on what constitutes South Africa's current development discourse. To be able to understand the contemporary development thought in South Africa, it is imperative to focus on two main theoretical positions that have shaped development thought over time.

A notable factor that has characterised development spaces over time is the contrast between less developed countries and developed countries. John Friedmann, as mentioned in Chapter 1, refers to this dichotomy as the core and periphery. The developed centre being the focus of economic growth, while the undeveloped hinterland being a downward area of decline and stagnation. Alongside this situation, the world has been historically divided into three different spheres. "*A threefold division on principally political and economic grounds; there was the First World of industrialised, market economy countries broadly capitalist or western world; the Second World of centrally planned economies, variously called the Communist Bloc or the socialist camp and the Third World of poorer countries, many of them recently independent from colonial rule*" (Dickenson *et al.*, 1996:4). The discrepancy of the centre and the periphery and the division into the First, Second and Third World, presupposes that whatever socio-economic and political thought that defined these world spaces was antagonistic or contradictory. So it was with development theories.

From the developed capitalist countries, there emerged a theoretical framework that centred around modern development. "*Modernisation theory, as it came to be called, took root in the academic citadels of the West and found expression across a broad spectrum of disciplinary domains*" (Johnston et al., 1995:67). From the East, or socialist countries led by the USSR and China, Marxism emerged as a dominant and a "*critical doctrine*" (Wallerstein, 1979:1) in the development of development theory. Social revolutions were seen by Marxists as essences of development for "*no society is ever static and totally unchanging*" (Rouxborough, 1979:1). The Third World was fundamentally colonial space of the First World, and with the ardor of the Cold War, it became a theoretical terrain of contest between capitalism of the West and socialism from the communist East. To this effect, what later emerged from the Third World as a response to modernisation theory in particular, was dependency theory. Wallerstein (1979:66) asserts that "*the term dependence...emerged out of the 'structuralist' [Marxist] theories of Latin American scholars and was meant as a rebuttal to 'developmentalist' or modernisation theories and 'monetarist' views*". What then are the tenets of these development thoughts and how did they shape the present conjuncture in South Africa?

2.4.1. Modernisation theory

The term 'modernisation' is derived from 'modern' which is the product of the Enlightenment discourse of the West. The West became the model, the prototype, and measure of social progress. It was the western civilisation, rationality and progress that was bestowed with relevance (Johnston, 1995:65). Modernisation as a development theory had its roots in W.W. Rostow's stages of economic growth theory. The Rostovian model prescribes that for a country to develop, it needs to undergo five stages: the traditional stage, the pre-conditions for take-off stage, take-off stage, drive to maturity stage and maturity stage (Fair, 1980:48). Wallerstein (1979:51) observes that Rostow describes the process of change that was undergone by Britain and "*felt that Britain was the crucial example since it was the first to embark on the evolutionary path to modern industrial world*". The inference in this instance is that, this path was a model to be copied by other states.

Modern economists "*considered an increase in per capita income to be a good proxy for attributes of development*" (World Development Report, 1991:31). "*Theorists were*

more precise about economic than social aspects" (Kotzé, 1983:1). Development was seen as a question of "increasing gross levels of savings and investment until the economy reaches a take-off point" (Burkey, 1993:27). The Gross National Product (GNP) was assumed to stand in a definite relation to social welfare (Friedmann, 1980). Modernists would argue that "the central problem in the theory of development is to understand the process by which a community which was previously saving 4 or 5 percent of its income or less converts itself into an economy where voluntary saving is about to 12 to 15 percent of national income or more" (World Development, 1991:33).

Coetzee (1989:120) identifies that modernisation theory:

- gives priority to encouraging international trade and foreign investment in the Third World and so gradually reduces aid programmes;
- encourages the development of 'modern' attitudes and entrepreneurial ambition to create an appropriate cultural medium in which modern economic institutions would thrive; and
- promotes development in the South since it is the a crucial long-term market for goods manufactured in the North.

Modernisation had far reaching implications for the colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In as far as Africa is concerned, Seidmann and Anang (1992:251) observe that "modernisation became popular among the first generation of Africanists from the West. In its normative dimension that theory implied that to become modern, an African state should copy an admittedly modern state ... a Western capitalist nation". The Euro-American model was transplanted to the Third World. It was hoped that with capital investment, technological innovations, *civilizing* the South, modern states, prototypes of the centre would emerge in the periphery. Thus suggesting that the "non-West could only progress, become developed, throw off its backwardness and traditions, by embracing relations with the West" (Johnston et al., 1995:67).

2.4.2 Dependency theory

A critical analysis of modernisation theories reveals that they are Western-ethnocentric, project Western values and equate development with modernity. Development and economic growth are synonyms of progress and high levels of civilisation. Coetzee (1989:36) critically argues that "the broad linear conception of modernisation as the movement from a state of underdevelopment (as if it should be

the universal way for all countries) cannot be accepted. Underdevelopment is not an original condition that can be eliminated stepwise in proportion to the components of modernity". The continued preoccupation of Western development theories with economic development and growth, as indicators of development necessitated an anti-thesis from the developing world, which criticised the Western modernisation model. As a result, dependency theory was formulated by a number of Latin American theorists using the Marxist perspective. However before this theory is hinted, a reflection on the basic assumptions of Marxism will be explicated.

2.4.2. Marxism

Marxism is a philosophy that originated from the teachings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. The basic assumptions of the Marxist theory are that, the development of a society occurs in several phases. First is slavery, then feudalism, capitalism, socialism and lastly communism, which is the ideal social phase that will bring less conflict and contradictions in the society. The theory continues to argue that contradictions within each stage of development, engenders social revolutions that necessitates a movement from one stage to the other. Marxists (practitioners of Marxism) were strongly opposed to colonialism and in this way Marxism became attractive to many territories that were colonised by the West. It was seen as "*a vision, a prophecy of a better society*" (Bottomore & Nisbet, 1979:69). With its emphasis on change through the working class referred to as the proletariat in alliance with the ordinary farmers workers, referred to as the peasantry, Marxism, inspired a number of revolutions in Africa, Asia and Latin America. China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua are among a number of countries that attained their independence through the inspiration of Marxism. It is from Marxism that the theory of dependency which sought to stem the tide of modernisation that got its roots.

2.4.3. Dependency theory

The most fundamental challenge to the theoretical framework of modernisation lies with the emergence of dependency theory. Oxaal *et al*, (1975:10) observe that the theory of dependency was a response to "*the perceived failure of the national development through...industrialisation and a growing disillusionment with existing*

development theory of modernisation". Coetzee (1989:37) explains that *"the dependency theory has seriously challenged the theoretical adequacy of this approach on the basis of its inability to grasp the causality and features of underdevelopment in the Third World societies"*. The theory maintained that dependence is a conditioning situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion by others. To the effect that, any relationship of interdependence, is a relationship of dependence. No country can exist on its own (Oxaal, 1975).

The assumptions of the theory are therefore that, the urbanised centres were themselves developing at the expense of the rural peripheries. The unequal relationships between the centres and the peripheries led to the development of former the underdevelopment of the latter. Dependency theory rejected imposed development solutions from the Western countries. Its approach was Marxist and there was a belief that, once the scourge of capitalism was removed, developing countries would be able to develop rapidly, as their development was hampered by the exploitation of Western countries. While this theory managed to expose some of the shortcomings of modernisation theory, which was positivistic in nature (Burkey, 1993), it however, failed to create a tangible operational framework that would otherwise inform the discourses of developing nations. This was observed by Hettne (1982:58) who asserts that, *"so much stress was put on external obstacles to development that the problem of how to initiate a development process, once these obstacles were removed, was rather neglected"*. A case of the Nicaraguan Revolution is a typical example. After years of political struggle the Sandinista government failed to secure electoral victory after barely ten years in power. Brown (1996: 277) observed that *"despite the emergence of a number of regimes committed to development of a non-capitalist path of development during the post-war era, discussions of the dynamics of the alternative have remained, to an alarming degree, absent from the theoretical corpus of development economics and studies"*.

2.4.4. An alternative definition

So far, an attempt has been made to throw light on some classical and modern conceptualisation of development in a quest to understand the contemporary understanding of the term. Perhaps the World Development Report of 1991 does

throw light on the contemporary understanding when it asserts that "*development in the broadest sense [seeks] to improve the quality of life, especially in the world's poor countries. The overall goal of development is therefore to increase the economic, political, and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic groups, religions, races regions and countries*" (World Development Report, 1991:31). Kotzé (1983:17) observes that development is an "*integrated change (political, social, economic, cultural) according to collective evaluative preferences which may be executed in an evolutionary or revolutionary manner through conscious human action*". Streeten quoted in Coetzee (1989:3), adds that, "*development is not about index numbers of national income, it is about people and for the people. Development must therefore begin by identifying basic needs. The objective is to raise the level of [the] living of the masses of the people ...*".

Recent assertions about development, indicate that there is recognition for the need for a paradigm shift from a modernist view. Alternative suggestions come from Coetzee (1989:108) who refers to a "*humanist view of development*"; what Friedmann, *et al.*, 1980; Derman *et al.*, 1985, Burkey, 1993, Van Zyl, 1995) refer to as '*another development*', '*human scale development*', '*people-centred development*', '*the new economics*' or '*humanistic economics*'.

It is evident that the Western-centred paradigm has not succeeded in addressing the fundamental needs of poor people found predominantly in the Third World. It is also very doubtful as to whether the modernisation theory had a human agency intention in its approach. The failure of two United Nations '*Decades of Development*', 1960 and 1970, to achieve development, testify to the bankruptcy of the models followed in pursuit of appropriate development. This therefore accounts for the new thinking that should attempt to narrow the disparities between the core and the periphery. A significant character of the periphery is that most of the nations in this zone are deprived of basic amenities. They lack, shelter, food, clothing that are primary survival requirements. They also need safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, health and educational facilities. For such basic needs to be met, it is vital that developing nations should have relevant political structures that will implement well-thought-out development programmes.

2.5. The South African development discourse

In line with the general attributes of developing nations, South Africa can be classified as a developing country. Historically, it has not escaped external colonialism neither has it escaped the influence of Marxism. As a British colony it has experienced the effects of the modernisation discourse. The development of industrial centres (Chapter 1), has created an economic space typical of the core-periphery model. As a country historically embattled along racial oligarchy, the forces opposed to racism had sharpened their ideological arsenal and sought refuge from a Marxist perspective. To this effect the contextualisation of the South African socio-economic relations as they manifest differently for different racial groups has been termed colonisation of a special type or internal colonialism. Wolpe in Oxaal (1975:231) notes that the South African Communist Party defined the colonial situation in South Africa by indicating that, *“South Africa is not a colony but an independent state yet the masses of our people enjoy neither independence nor freedom. The conceding of independence to South Africa by Britain was designed in the interests of imperialism. Power was transferred in the hands of the white minority alone. A new type of colonialism was developed, in which the oppressing white nation occupied the same territory as the oppressed themselves”*.

It is not the aim of this study to trace the history of South Africa’s development thought, however, it is to affirm or disaffirm whether the world’s most influential discourses had an impact on South Africa. Indeed they have impacted tremendously; in fact they existed side by side as opposing political ideologies. A question which will not be answered in this treatise, is whether Marxism or capitalism is presently dominant in South Africa. As nation in transition it may be difficult to draw a line. However there is a thin line that suggests that South Africa is opting for mixture of the basic needs approach and an economic stabilisation approach. Himmelstrand *et al.* (1994:91) describe the human needs approach as the approach where irrespective of political ideology, one strategy which is *“agreeable to all political and social petit bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, workers the peasants and above all also foreign bodies and the different UN bodies”*. So far there has not been any irredeemable ‘crisis’ in terms of the development path adopted by South Africa since 1994. Also, since 1994 it is observable in South Africa that emphasis is placed on stimulating growth and stabilising the economy so that more jobs can be created. In his 1999

presidential address to parliament President Mbeki resolved, *"we have to ensure we continue to develop a growing economy which is well-managed, to ensure increased national wealth and job creation"*⁸. With the stabilisation approach countries seek to *"reduce balance of payment problems, reduce inflation, stimulate economic efficiency and arrest economic decline"*(Himmelstrand *et al.*, 1994:93).

2.5.1. South Africa's development task

Whatever discourse has emerged or is emerging the development task in South Africa is a mammoth one. A critical point mentioned in Chapter 1 is the character of the rural spaces in South Africa. These are worst areas in terms of development. Found predominantly in the former homelands of South Africa (Figure 1.2) these areas were reincorporated into South Africa in 1994 as part of South Africa's Provinces, after a long history of 'separate development'. They are characterised by poor facilities, destitution, lack of infrastructure and a high incidence of poverty. Underdevelopment is therefore *"greater in, but not limited to, former homelands"* (Flaherty, 1995:14). Commenting on the conditions in the former homelands, Dexter (1993:37) noted: *"it is well-known that the essential services such as health and education are of a poor standard in the bantustans. Schools and hospitals or clinics are inaccessible to large numbers of people. In 1990 in the Cape Province, R99-00 per person was spent on health. In the Transkei, in the same year, R25-00 was spent per person"*.

It is also noted by the White Paper on Rural Development that there are five critical areas that constitute the South African rural reality:

- high levels of poverty, especially among women-headed households,
- agricultural dualism, both in land use and support services,
- spatial chaos and stark contrasts between former homelands and the white rural farms around, in terms of settlement patterns, land ownership and use, transport and other infrastructure,
- historical restrictions on entrepreneurial development, and poor support and
- new local government structures set up in 1995, with no history or experience of plan, democracy or service (South Africa, 1995:9).

⁸ Presidential Address to Parliament, 25 June 1999.

This continued poverty and underdevelopment in the rural areas has, as a matter of fact, posed a great challenge to the incumbent government, where what was homeland underdevelopment has become present day provincial underdevelopment. The provinces have, in the process of transition, inherited the backwardness of these rural areas. There is, however, hope that the *status quo* will be remedied as the incumbent government has adopted a national renewal framework in the form of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Also, in recognition of the challenges confronting the rural periphery, a White Paper on Rural Development Strategy was published in 1998 with the hope of engendering debate and concomitant action around rural development.

2.5.2. The state as the catalyst

It is evident that the development task that faces the peripheral regions needs sound political organisational structures that will be able to rise to the challenge of demands of development. It is not unreasonable to expect that the task of developing people should be borne by the government with the participation of its citizens. Derman *et al.* (1985:1) advise that "*despite many of the growing problems, people throughout the world continue to see the government as the mechanism for bringing about development*". Nelson-Richards (1982:32) also observes that "*because of the complex nature of development it is the state that should provide [an initiative]*". Glassman and Samatar (1997:167) state that "*the Third World state has taken a terrific beating in the last two decades. Nevertheless it remains a major player in the domestic affairs of those countries. Consequently the state plays multiple functions at any time, given the complexity of the development process*".

The truth is that citizens should not be spectator-beneficiaries — they need to be involved in the planning and implementation of development programmes. People, defined as '*civil society*', are a "*potential location of power outside the state*" (McIlwaine, 1998: 415). Their involvement in matters of civil society should ensure participation; defined by Coetzee and Graaff, (1996:318) as "*achieving power in terms of access to, and control of, resources necessary to protect livelihood*", empowerment and democratisation. This situation will thus serve as a "*political legitimisation of institutional programmes without significant conflict*" (Hope & Edge, 1996:61). Nevertheless it is the articulation of the country's '*popular programme*'

(Brown, 1997) that ultimately will determine "*whether its citizens live better than they did before*" (World Development Report, 1996).

A significant point that this chapter raises is the position adopted by science in a world of poverty destitution and civil strife. Different periods in the history of humankind have presented challenges to scientists who sought to give meaning to the flux and dynamism of the *natural* (human and physical) phenomena. The chapter recognises that time can create different geographies, be they physical or mental. Social constructs are a product of the geographies of the mind. Sometimes these social constructs like the "*construction of ethnic consciousness*" (Vandenberg, 2000:218) by apartheid South Africa can be very detrimental to the creation of democratic spaces. The chapter raises a human question: what should be the role of geography science in the midst of all these?

The contribution of geography as a social science in advancing the realisation of a better quality of life in the World's communities could be espoused by practicable paradigms. Geography should generate theory and practice that affords a holistic approach to the understanding of *nature* (people and the environment) and its diversity. Daniels S and Lee R. (1996:9) observe that, "*both the discipline of geography and the practice of geography on the ground are socially constructed and so form an integral part of social practice. Human life is inherently social and so is shaped at particular times and particular places by the prevailing sets of social relations into which we are born*". In this sense, there can be no way in which researchers in geography can emphasise the positivist ontologies and methodologies at the peril of the social constructs. Evans in Smith and Eyles (1988:195) assert that "*by restricting the extent of social phenomena to that which is directly observable there is a tendency to extract the phenomena from the social context in which they are observed and measurable. This in turn leads to a tendency to omit consideration of the largely non-observable values, meanings and intentions*". To comprehend human meanings and intentions, researchers in human geography should employ research methodologies that are congruent to the understanding of social reality.

This discourse recognises that for an understanding of social reality like the poverty pertinent in the Western Highveld Region, the method of investigation into this social phenomenon should be able to capture human expectations, frustrations, motives

and meanings created by this rural space. The qualitative method, which employs individual interviews, focus group interviews, participation observation and questionnaires about feelings and intentions was preferred as the central method of enquiry. This method "searches for and accepts the definitions and meanings of the social world as given, it reconstructs reality by revealing the taken-for granted assumptions of individuals and groups in space (Eyles & Smith, 1988:2). Chapter 3 will focus on how the method was utilised in this investigation.

This chapter concentrates on the methods and procedures used in the research. A justification of why the chosen procedures were given preference and problems to the study will also be highlighted.

Physical science is defined by Eyles and Smith (1988:2) as "a particular way of viewing the social world through an understanding of scientific methods and values to their own lives". The definition by Eyles and Smith (1988:2) in their research is about the lived world, the social world, the world as perceived with their environment.

As indicated in chapter 2, that the positivist view looked at the world from a scientific view, where issues of the natural world were given preference over human experience. It was also mentioned that it is a lack of preference for qualitative methods in work with data related to human phenomena, which led to a mechanical understanding of the Human Geography. The quote by (Grove, 1934:9) remarks that "the use of methods of natural science in the social research, but not an exclusive role, physical scientists stand in a very different relationship to the phenomena they are studying from that of social scientists". This quotation suggests that methods followed in the physical and natural sciences are legitimate but inadequate to the study of social phenomena. The next question is that, if that is the situation, which method is appropriate for social investigation?